

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 21

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to recognize Hazel B. Thomas on the occasion of her retirement.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize, particularly on the occasion of their retirement, those outstanding teachers who have devoted their careers to providing the highest quality education for Tennessee's students; and

WHEREAS, one such outstanding individual is Hazel Thomas who, having served with distinction throughout her tenure as an educator and political activist, recently began a much deserved retirement from her post with the Tennessee Department of Education, which she has served as Director of PASS (Partnerships to Assist School Success), as Regional Coordinator for PATS (Positive Attitudes for Tennessee Schools), and worked with the Tennessee Academy for School Leaders; she now lends her extraordinary experience to the Office of Professional Development as an educational consultant; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Thomas graduated from Fisk University with a Bachelor of Arts in English; continuing her education, she received a Master's Degree in Education from Tennessee State University; further adding to her vast expertise, Mrs. Thomas received a National Defense Education Act Scholarship in oral language to Southern Illinois University, and a National Defense Education Act Scholarship in math to George Peabody College; and

WHEREAS, she began her distinguished teaching career with Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools in 1954, teaching reading to elementary and middle school students until 1987, at which time she began her illustrious tenure with the Tennessee Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Thomas led the way for public school children and teachers, lending her expertise and skills to numerous educational boards, associations, and committees; her

noteworthy involvement in the Tennessee Education Association (TEA) and the National Education Association (NEA) has truly served as an inspiration to her colleagues; and

WHEREAS, the list of achievements by Hazel Thomas is voluminous, she has demonstrated the utmost professionalism and ability while serving as the President of the Tennessee Association of Classroom Teachers and as President of the Southeastern Regional Association of Classroom Teachers; and

WHEREAS, her friendship and counsel were highly valued by her associates while she served as Chair of the Chapter One Advisory Committee for Metropolitan Schools, Chair of the Legislative Committee of the Metropolitan Nashville Education Association, Chair of the Distinguished Classroom Teachers Award, Chair of the Upper Elementary Teachers of the Tennessee Education Association, and District Director of the Metropolitan Nashville Association Executive Board; and

WHEREAS, her political career is as impressive as her teaching career and Mrs. Thomas has played an important and active role in several congressional, gubernatorial, and presidential campaigns; she honorably served as a delegate to the 1984 and 1992 Democratic National Conventions; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Thomas, who has often been called upon for her leadership and energy in the political arena, served as Vice President and Co-Chair of the Bylaws Committee of the National Federation of Democratic Women, Legislative Chair and Regional Vice President of the Tennessee Federation of Democratic Women, President of the Davidson County Democratic Women's Club from 1985 until 1987, Vice President of the National Women's Caucus, President and Secretary of the Tennessee Women's Political Caucus, and President and Program Committee Chair of the Nashville Women's Political Caucus; and

WHEREAS, she was chosen to accompany President Jimmy Carter as a Goodwill Ambassador to study the educational systems in Caracas, Venezuela in 1977 and was again called upon for her professional authority by the United States Information Agency to teach political skills to woman in Nairobi, Kenya in 1997; and

WHEREAS, throughout her many years of service, Hazel Thomas has distinguished herself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to the State of Tennessee, participating in numerous noteworthy civic associations and committees; she has

served on the Citizens Committee for the Governor's Prayer Breakfast since 1989, Athena Awards Committee, Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, and as President of the Bellevue Sertoma Club in 1990 and 1991; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Thomas epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional and has been recognized with numerous awards of distinction; she was an award recipient of the National Negro Business and Professional Women's Club, a Ten Year Pin from Girl Scouts of America, and she is listed in *Who's Who in American Education*; and

WHEREAS, her many professional accomplishments aside, Mrs. Thomas was fortunate to have shared both love and companionship with her late husband, Dr. Charles Thomas, and her daughter, Deborah Thomas, also deceased; she is the proud mother of Dr. Charles Thomas, PhD.; and

WHEREAS, throughout her estimable career, Hazel B. Thomas has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of her colleagues and students alike; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we extend to Hazel B. Thomas our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.